

The Ernest Green Story

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in a unanimous 9-0 decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in America's public school systems was "inherently unequal." The following year, *Brown II* delegated the task of carrying out school desegregation to district courts with orders that desegregation occur "with all deliberate speed." In September 1957, nine African-American teenagers stood up to an angry mob protesting the integration of Little Rock Central High School.

The Ernest Green Story is the true account of Ernest and the other eight African-American high school students as they embarked on their historic journey to integrate Little Rock Central High School in 1957. As the only senior of the Little Rock Nine, Ernest was ultimately viewed by many to be the leader of this group.

Assignment: After watching *The Ernest Green Story*, describe the challenges Green faced as the oldest African-American male student and the only senior attempting to graduate while integrating an all-white high school. What challenges do leaders face today? What challenges do you think you will face as a senior in high school?

Disney's Ruby Bridges

Ruby Bridges was denied access to social development, to education, and to a healthy self-image as she attempted to integrate New Orleans Public Schools by attending William Frantz Elementary School. Bridges was only six years old when her parents responded to a call by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and volunteered their daughter's participation in the impending integration. Through this process, Bridges observed many injustices that she as a child could not understand.

Assignment: Describe the unique challenges a young person may face as they try to grasp the magnitude and impact that social justice has on our society today (consider race and disability as a barrier to equal access to opportunities).

Selma, Lord, Selma

See the profoundly moving early days of the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of two young heroes who help Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organize a black voter registration march in Selma, Alabama. In 1965 Alabama, an 11-year-old girl is touched by a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. and becomes a devout follower. But her resolution is tested when she joins others in the famed march from Selma to Montgomery.

Assignment: Young people contributed to civil rights more than many people realize. Conduct Internet research and locate young people who made a contribution to the Civil Rights Movement. Look beyond the obvious such as the Little Rock Nine and Ruby Bridges. Present your findings to the class.

Hairspray

Even though most people associate segregation and discrimination only with the South, African-Americans were denied equal access while facing social injustices all over the United States. Set in Baltimore, Maryland, *Hairspray* depicts a glimpse of these injustices during the early 1960s. *The Corny Collins Show*, a local TV program comprised of perfect white teenagers, reminds its viewers that there is a right size and image to ensure access to opportunities. Tracy Turnblad and her black friends believe the treatment to be unfair and should not be tolerated. These teenagers fight to integrate *The Corny Collins Show*. Before *Soul Train* and Bill Cosby's *I Spy*, there was a very limited African-American representation on television. *American Bandstand*, the basis for *The Corny Collins Show* did little to include African-Americans.

Assignment: Research the denied access of African-Americans in entertainment and the development of minority images in the media during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, describe the impact of the media on the Central High School integration crisis.